



STATE SENATOR  
**DAVID  
LONG**

Indiana State Senate  
200 West Washington Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204



**2004 Post-Session Newsletter**

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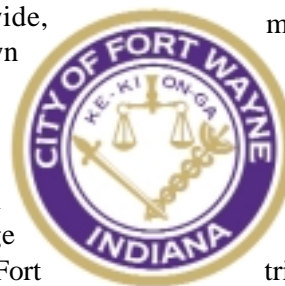
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## Community Focus

### Long Passes Bill to Revitalize Southtown and Downtown

Last year, I authored a bill that revolutionized our state's Community Revitalization Enhancement Districts (CRED). Previously, about five of these districts had been created statewide, including one at Southtown Mall.

The new law changed CRED districts, making them apply to the downtown areas of all Indiana's large cities (except Indianapolis). Fort Wayne's downtown area was the model for this new law. It was called the most important economic development tool for Indiana cities in many years. Importantly, CRED districts formed under the old law, such as Southtown's,



were protected.

This year, I authored SB 180, which ultimately passed in another bill in the last hours of the session. The bill does several key things: (1) it makes it more attractive for a developer such as Menards to locate at Southtown; (2) it also makes it more likely that new development will come to downtown Fort Wayne; and (3) it ensures that CRED districts will be able to have the maximum economic impact possible for our cities.

The new CRED law will be a critical tool in the effort to revitalize both Fort Wayne's downtown, as well as those of cities throughout Indiana.



*Sen. Long addresses the Senate to discuss SB 180. He inserted the CRED provisions, which initially were included in SB 180, into HEA 1365.*

## 2004 Facts & Figures

The Second Regular Session of the 113th General Assembly began on Organization Day, November 18, 2003, and adjourned March 4, 2004.

This non-budget year is known as the "short" session.

Senate bills introduced: 503  
Senate joint resolutions introduced: 10

Senate bills passed: 18  
Senate joint resolutions passed: 0

House bills introduced: 459  
House joint resolutions introduced: 7

House bills passed: 80  
House joint resolutions passed: 0

Percent of introduced bills that were sent to the governor: 10%

For more information about the General Assembly's 2004 session, visit us online at:  
[www.in.gov/legislative](http://www.in.gov/legislative)

Visit my web site at:  
[www.in.gov/S16](http://www.in.gov/S16)



## State Senator David Long

Serving District 16 — Allen County



## Property Taxes Remain Priority

The Indiana General Assembly started the 2004 legislative session earlier than usual to address property tax issues. Ordinarily, the legislature convenes for one day on the third Tuesday in November, called Organization Day, in order to meet and do general 'housekeeping' business.

This session, legislators conducted committee meetings and held session in November and December to attempt to ease the property tax burden for homeowners, farmers, and employers hit with higher tax bills than expected.

Due to the court-ordered property tax reassessment, some problems have surfaced in a few counties around the state. During several weeks in the fall, members of the Senate Finance Committee met around the state to gather information and evaluate state policy on property taxes.

The result of the "mini-session," Senate Enrolled Act 1, includes many of the good ideas citizens offered to help address the

### What Senate Enrolled Act 1 Does:

- Allows counties to waive penalties assessed for late payment of property taxes
- Allows taxpayers to pay their property taxes in installments
- Extends the filing deadline for existing property tax deductions and exemptions
- Requires approval from elected officials of significant property tax increases by non-elected boards, such as libraries.
- Streamlines the property tax appeal process to make it easier for taxpayers
- Requires assessors to use most favorable assessment method for rental properties
- Repeals local governments' ability to raise and spend excess levies and requires any excess funds to be used to reduce future levies

problems.

One of the most important provisions of SEA 1 will limit future property tax increases through strict controls on local govern-

— see **PROPERTY TAX**, page 3

## Medicare Fraud Schemes Target Senior Citizens

Senior citizens should be alert and aware of identity theft schemes that are intended to defraud the Medicare program. Although this program is run by the federal government, state legislators have been alerted to a scam that could carry a devastating cost.

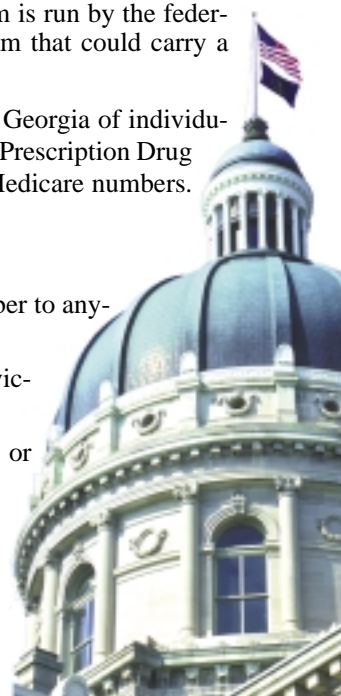
There have been reports in Indiana, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Georgia of individuals going door-to-door to sign up senior citizens for the Medicare Prescription Drug Cards or to sell them Medigap insurance in exchange for their Medicare numbers.

### MEDICARE DOES NOT GO DOOR-TO-DOOR.

Seniors can protect themselves by doing the following:

- Never give your Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security number to anyone who comes to your door.
- Never give these numbers to anyone who promises "free services."
- Hang up on telemarketers who ask for any of these numbers or for your bank account number.

Call, toll-free, 1-800-986-3505 to report suspected Medicare fraud and abuse. It will ring into your local Area Agency on Aging. Area Agencies are part of the Medicare fraud prevention project called Senior ESP. All suspected fraud and abuse case information is confidential.





The End of a Legacy



State Senator Charles "Bud" Meeks died March 22, 2004, after an extended battle with cancer. He devoted his life to public service, first as a law enforcement official and later as a legislator.

Upon graduation from Central High School in 1954, Meeks enlisted in the United States Navy where he served until 1958. In 1990, he retired from Indiana Air Guard's 122nd Tactical Fighter Wing at Fort Wayne International Airport.

From 1975-1982, Meeks served as the Sheriff of Allen County. He later took a job as the executive director of the National Sheriff's Association in Washington, D.C.

As a legislator, constituents remained his number one priority. Meeks constantly pursued legislation beneficial to Fort Wayne and all of Northeast Indiana. A believer in representative government, he relied on constituent feedback to formulate legislation.

Even towards the end of his life, Meeks embraced every opportunity to teach young people the value of democracy. For six years, he schooled hundreds of pages on the ins and outs of the legislative process, often entertaining them with humorous anecdotes.

A beloved statesman and teacher, Sen. Meeks leaves an indelible mark on the people he met and the lives he touched. His presence will be missed, but his spirit survives.

Information Emergency?  
DIAL 2-1-1



We are living in an age where information is as close as a click of a mouse button. In the past few years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of agencies and help centers available to answer problems we citizens may encounter. Despite this abundance of information, it is difficult to know where to turn for specific questions. With the introduction of a new and free telephone service, help is now a short phone call away.

2-1-1 is a new service that provides immediate access to every certified social service agency and non-profit organization in the state of Indiana. The resources that 2-1-1 offers include food banks, shelters, and rent assistance, as well as employment assistance such as education programs. It also provides information on health insurance programs, support groups, home health care,

after school programs, protective services, and volunteer opportunities.

Currently, 20 counties are using 2-1-1. This year, a bill was passed that will establish the program throughout Indiana. HEA 1344 requests absolutely no state money, while creating an account for future funds. 2-1-1 is generally funded with money from the United Way, as well as the Cinergy Foundation, which has pledged over \$600,000 to help fund this program over the next three years.

2-1-1 works in the same way that 9-1-1 operates for emergencies and 4-1-1 works for general information. The goal is to have this service available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The state will continue to work diligently with the Indiana 2-1-1 Partnership to develop this service across Indiana.

What Types of Referrals 2-1-1 Offers:

Basic Human Needs Resources — food and clothing banks, shelters, rent assistance, and utility assistance.

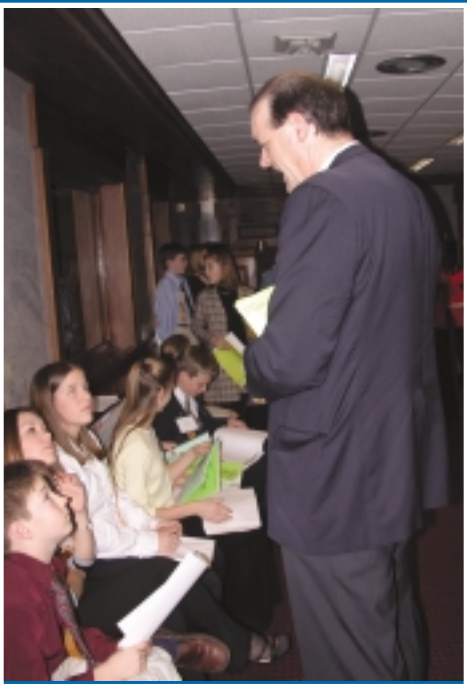
Physical and Mental Health Resources — health insurance programs, Medicaid and Medicare, maternal health resources, health insurance programs for children, medical information lines, crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention and rehabilitation.

Work Support — financial assistance, job training, transportation assistance and education programs.

Support for Older Americans and Persons with Disabilities — adult day care, congregate meals, respite care, home health care, transportation, and homemaker services.

Children, Youth and Family Support — child care, after school programs, educational programs for low-income families, family resource centers, summer camps and recreation programs, mentoring, tutoring, and protective services.

For more information, visit [www.211.org](http://www.211.org)



Sen. Long discusses a bill with pages during a busy session day. Paging allows students in 6th grade through 12th grade to experience the legislative process firsthand.

GET INVOLVED

Over 200 years ago, our founding fathers collaborated to create a representative democracy. An intricate system of checks and balances emerged, giving citizens a means to govern free from tyranny. Every year, students study this historical phenomenon in the classroom; however, no book can tell the whole story.

The General Assembly recognizes the importance of exposing young people to the democratic process. As a result, legislators offer students an important opportunity at the Statehouse.

Any student from 6th grade to 12th grade can sign up to serve as a page for a day. The Senate Page Office will try to accommodate requests for specific dates, and students will be excused from school for the day.

Pages spend a day in the Senate assisting their local legislators. Responsibilities include responding to senators' requests, delivering messages and running errands. The day includes a tour of the Statehouse and observation of a session.

Those interested in serving as a page should send their name, age, address, phone number and school affiliation to: State Senator David Long, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204. You can also e-mail him at [S16@in.gov](mailto:S16@in.gov) or call, toll-free, 1-800-382-9467.

Legislators will begin accepting requests in November. The 2005 session begins in early January and extends until late April.

PROPERTY TAX  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ment spending. In 2002, legislators tried to anticipate the effects of reassessment and passed a bill that shifted the tax burden to sales and gaming taxes in order to generate an additional \$1 billion in tax relief for residential property owners. The legislature did not anticipate the substantial increases in local government budgets that counteracted much of the property tax relief.

Property taxes are very complex compared to other ways government programs

and services are financed, and the debate continued when session reconvened in January. House Enrolled Act 1001 was enacted to clarify and update language in SEA 1.

Senators also recognized the need to restore the value of certain targeted property tax deductions to levels prior to the reassessment. SEA 296 updates existing deductions for the elderly, blind or disabled, wartime service disabled, disabled veteran, surviving spouse of a WWI veteran, WWI veteran, residential property rehabilitation, historic property rehabilitation, and residen-

tially distressed area property rehabilitation.

We want to be fair and do what's right for Hoosier homeowners. There are no quick and easy solutions. During this year's session, the legislature formed the Property Tax Replacement Study Commission, consisting of legislators, farmers, businessmen, and homeowners that will study the impact of eliminating property taxes altogether in the state of Indiana. The committee will meet throughout the summer and fall, receive input from Indiana taxpayers across the state, and make a recommendation by December.

HOUSE ENROLLED ACT 1265 — Establishes a program pooling state employees to negotiate lower prices for bulk purchases of prescription drugs. Applies to schools, state colleges and universities, and cities and towns. PASSED. My vote: YES

SENATE BILL 85 — Makes it illegal to have open alcoholic beverage containers in a motor vehicle, regardless of whether or not the driver has been drinking. This law would have brought Indiana \$13.5 million in federal funds. FAILED. My vote: YES

HOUSE ENROLLED ACT 1082 — Requires a review of entries in the Missing Children Clearinghouse within 60 days after the review required by laws governing reports made to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). PASSED. My vote: YES

HOUSE ENROLLED ACT 1194 — Opens state records regarding a child who died as a result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Requires extensive background checks on all members of a household for temporary and permanent placements. PASSED. My vote: YES

HOUSE ENROLLED ACT 1394 —Stiffens penalties for drunk driving offenses. Requires lifetime license suspension of a person with two convictions for OWI causing death. Passed in honor of Rep. Roland Stine. PASSED. My vote: YES

SENATE ENROLLED ACT 1019 — Requires the adoption of rules regulating safety standards for bull ride simulators, which stems from a tragic incident at the Porter County fairgrounds. Also regulates indoor pyrotechnics. PASSED. My vote: YES